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New York

President: Mr. Ping ..... (Gabon)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 12 and 41

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/59/3 and Add.1)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/59/160)

Report by the Secretary-General (A/59/346)

The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

The President: In connection with agenda item 12, I would like to recall for the members of the Assembly that, pursuant to resolution 58/316 of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2004, to consider agenda item 12 in its entirety at a plenary meeting.

I would also like to remind members that at its 18th plenary meeting, on 4 October 2004, the Assembly was informed that the General Committee took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider agenda item 12 in its entirety in a plenary meeting, the relevant parts of Chapter I of the report that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees will be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Her Excellency Mrs. Marjatta Rasi, to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Ms. Rasi: It is my honour to present the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2004, which is before the Assembly in document A/59/3 and Addendum 1.

Over the last few years, the Economic and Social Council has made significant strides in addressing the international development agenda in a holistic, coherent and coordinated manner. That has been achieved largely by bringing together important institutional stakeholders in one forum to address the development challenges of our time, by promoting integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits, by effectively coordinating the activities of the United Nations system, by pursuing a comprehensive approach to the issues of peace and development and, above all, by providing a forum for dialogue on the emerging challenges of development, their policy implications and how to design effective international responses. That has enabled the Council to attract a large number of high-level policy-makers, heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and important stakeholders, including civil society.

This year witnessed not only further strengthening of those trends but also some innovative approaches to promoting dialogue on issues of concern

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to the policy-makers. The policy dialogue of the high-level segment on the world economic situation and international cooperation was enriched by the presentation of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and led to candid discussion on that issue. That was perhaps the first time that the Council engaged in such a way on the issue of globalization, which remains the defining feature of our time.

As mandated by the General Assembly, the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization focused this year on specific areas of the Monterrey Consensus and their impact on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. It helped maintain the political momentum on financing for development, building on the closer relationship fostered with the Bretton Woods institutions and World Trade Organization (WTO) during the financing for development process. Owing to the Economic and Social Council's increased cooperation with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the WTO and other United Nations bodies working in economic development, the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council has developed into a strategic platform where actions in support of the Monterrey Consensus are discussed.

At its high-level segment, the Council addressed the extremely important theme of resources mobilization and an enabling environment for poverty eradication in the least developed countries (LDCs). That theme was anchored in the follow-up to the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. The concerns of the LDCs were thereby firmly placed at the forefront of the international agenda, providing an opportunity to reflect on how to work towards mobilizing resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the LDCs.

The Ministerial Declaration that was adopted this year reaffirms our commitment to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in a timely manner. It points to the need for creating an overall enabling environment for national and international actions to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable development and strengthen the partnership between the LDCs and the international community, if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in those countries.

The coordination segment this year achieved significant progress on the issue of gender mainstreaming in the entities of United Nations system and in the work of intergovernmental bodies. All United Nations entities have been asked to develop action plans with time lines for implementing the goals agreed at the 1997 session of the Economic and Social Council. That will help strengthen commitment and accountability at the highest levels within the United Nations system. The Council also recommended that the General Assembly encourage its committees and other intergovernmental bodies, to take further measures to integrate gender perspectives systematically into all areas of their work.

Within the coordination segment, the Council also reviewed United Nations system support to rural development in developing countries. This area was a follow-up to last year's Ministerial Declaration. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to promoting partnerships for sustainable rural development between entities of the United Nations system, Member States, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and it urged the United Nations system organizations to help countries further their agenda in rural development efficiently.

At the operational activities segment it was broadly recognized that the system is indeed becoming better coordinated and more coherent and effective in supporting national development efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed goals.

It was, at the same time acknowledged, that further progress is needed to ensure genuine national ownership and leadership of the national development process. Along with adequate and predictable resources, greater alignment and integration of United Nations activities with national processes and priorities are essential objectives. The Council has thus contributed in a substantive manner to preparing the ground for the triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR), to be discussed by the General Assembly shortly.

An important innovation this year was the organization of a joint event with the operational and humanitarian affairs segments of the Economic and Social Council, that helped focus discussion on the issue of transition from relief to development. During the discussions, it was stressed that there was a need to

develop a common understanding of when transition starts and how rehabilitation and reconstruction should be linked. In pursuing that further, the Council emphasized the need for a more inclusive dialogue with Member States on that complex issue.

At the humanitarian affairs segment, the Council called for enhanced collaboration within the United Nations system. The Council felt the need to clarify the respective roles of entities within the United Nations system and address their inherent complementarities in the field of humanitarian assistance. Coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance was also a priority for this year. To that end, two thematic panel discussions on strengthening response to natural disasters, with an emphasis on capacity-building, and maintaining a field presence in high-risk environments prompted a lively and productive discussion. Hopefully, the agreed outcomes of the session will enhance the coordination efforts of the United Nations system in that important area.

The general segment, as in previous years, addressed a whole range of issues, including the question of the graduation of the least developed countries. That has proven to be one of the most intractable issues. However, I am happy to report that the Council has now succeeded in developing a consensual approach on the issue, which will greatly facilitate the smooth transition of the least developed countries towards their graduation.

One of the major achievements of the Economic and Social Council has been its increasing involvement in countries emerging from conflict and its increasing collaboration with the Security Council in such matters. As requested by the framework resolution establishing the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, an assessment of their functioning was completed in May 2004. It was found that the Groups had done constructive work in support of the countries concerned through their broad, open and participatory approach, in fruitful collaboration with United Nations system organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and in their strong advocacy for adequate resources for peace building and reconstruction. The Council has thus extended the mandates of both Groups.

Within the context of the Economic and Social Council's work on conflict prevention and peace-building, it is my pleasure to announce that, under a separate mandate, the Council decided in July 2004 to reactivate the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The activities of that Group will focus on a long-term development programme for the country. The composition of the Group will be announced shortly and we can expect it to begin work as soon as possible.

The Economic and Social Council is perhaps the only Charter body that has shown immense capacity to reform, innovate and adapt to the changing realities and challenges of development. It has been a continuous process and it is still under way. To enrich that process, a panel discussion was organized where a number of interesting proposals were presented for further enhancing the role of the Council. Hopefully, the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will give those efforts further impetus.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the active and effective participation of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other parts of civil society in this session of the Council. A significant number of preparatory regional meetings were organized by the informal regional networks. They also organized a forum on the margins of the high-level segment and made substantive contributions to the work of the Council.

The United Nations Charter emphasizes that peace and security and development are indivisible. In this spirit it is important that the Economic and Social Council enhance its cooperation with the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the President of the Economic and Social Council. I give the floor to the representative of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): I would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Representative of Finland, on the introduction of the report of the Economic and Social Council. Her very comprehensive report clearly outlines the range of activities of the Council and I would like to commend it for its work over the past year.

My intervention is on agenda item 41, namely, the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order. I have the honour to make this

statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States of the United Nations.

The delegation of Guyana, whose former President, the late Cheddi Jagan, was a champion of that concept, will be addressing the issue later in the joint debate.

I would like, on behalf of the other CARICOM member States, to support the proposal. The evolving process of globalization is leading to the greater integration of markets, larger economies of scale and high levels of prosperity for some. At the same time, we are also being confronted by growing inequalities in the distribution of its benefits. Disparities between rich and poor within and among countries have increased, and this has had an adverse effect on human development. These challenges facing the international community suggest the need for coherent multilateral approaches in addressing today's global problems. We believe that a concept of a new global human order offers a framework for integrating the economic, environmental, social, cultural and political aspects of development, and we call on Members of the United Nations to give careful consideration to the proposal.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The operationalization of this approach to development can best be undertaken, we believe, under the auspices of a global body such as the United Nations. Indeed it is opportune to use the United Nations in this manner, given that the underlying objective of the new global human order could provide a sound platform, not only for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, but also for the promotion of development over the long term. This will be a central challenge as we prepare for the review summit which will be held next year at the beginning at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Karran (Guyana): In taking the floor to address agenda item 41 on the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order, I align my delegation fully with the remarks made on this item by the representative of Barbados on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

As we stated in the Assembly when this item was first introduced by the Guyana delegation, its aim is to promote a new and enlightened partnership for peace and development, involving all actors of the world community, based on mutual respect, democratic governance and popular participation, so as to comprehensively address the challenges of sustainable development and poverty eradication and to arrest the ever-growing disparities among and within countries.

Our memorandum to the Secretary-General contained in document A/59/283 sets out our views on the proposal for a new global human order.

The consensus that emerged from the series of United Nations conferences and summits during the 1990s established the fact that the eradication of poverty was a central challenge for national and international policy. In this context, the Millennium Development Goals outline the principal targets to be met to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. The indications are, however, that there is now barely enough time to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The window of opportunity to halve poverty by 2015 is quickly closing. In addition to targeted plans and strategies, a rapid scaling-up of international cooperation will be required if those targets are to be met.

The structural challenges to the pursuit of human development are compounded by the problems of war and conflict in some parts of the world, which tend to displace development from the agenda of the international community. With the widening of concepts of security and the strengthening of local and global interaction between its different dimensions, the development agenda could become further marginalized. This tendency could perpetuate the status quo and create new imbalances in international relations, thus reinforcing the patterns of inequality that have prevailed over the past decade. The indissoluble link between development, peace and security must be addressed, since, if the development agenda fails, peace is certain to be imperilled — and vice versa. We are hopeful that the outcome of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will help us to address these challenges in a mutually complementary fashion.

It must also be emphasized that the threat to democracy that is inherent in any failure to pay attention to development is real. Development policies over the past decade have been discussed largely in terms of whether or not they enable a country to take

full advantage of a world economy that is more closely integrated than at any other time in history. Far from redistributing global wealth — the goal that has animated most of the development discourse since the 1960s — we appear to be faced, instead, with the redistribution of global poverty. According to the 2003 *Human Development Report*, which gave us the first glimpse of the progress made in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, some 54 countries were poorer in 2000 than they were in 1990.

It is also cause for concern that, in value terms, the human development index has fallen dramatically in 21 countries since the report was first published in 1990. In most cases, those countries embraced macroeconomic reform, trade liberalization, open investment rules and improved fiscal management. Those policies did not automatically produce the expected benefits. Notwithstanding this situation, we share the basic belief that fast and sustained employment-intensive growth is the only means of effectively reducing poverty.

The wide disparity in the economic and social conditions of the developed and developing countries is matched by an equally serious difference in their perspectives on development policy. An urgent reconciliation of the widely divergent views of the partners on world economic and social issues is a prerequisite for progress in the future. The mere papering over of those differences will ultimately fail the test of implementation.

The new global human order is a genuine and earnest attempt to find common ground on which future international cooperation can be solidly founded in order to provide a comprehensive and holistic framework for development cooperation. Far from competing with other initiatives and proposals already in existence and currently being pursued, it is intended as a complementary device for facilitating consensus on what actions we must take. Conceivably, it could also serve as a safety valve if or when, for whatever reason, the established negotiating processes flounder or fail.

The new global human order is simultaneously a philosophical framework and a practical agenda for development. Its concrete proposals include a comprehensive and definitive solution to the debt problem; the fashioning of new policies on official development assistance; the mobilization of new and additional resources; the strengthening and, if necessary, reshaping of global institutions; the development of a more central role for the United Nations in global economic policy-making; and a review of the role of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization to increase the focus on human development.

A central challenge for the international community is finding the political will to energize our efforts to create a new development paradigm for the twenty-first century. My delegation intends to work with others of like mind to explore with development partners the outer limits to which they would wish to go in development cooperation. Such a dialogue could establish the basic terms and conditions of a new partnership and, at the same time, provide a certain degree of predictability and reliability to our cooperation.

There can be no doubt that the best forum for undertaking such reconciliation and consensus-building is the United Nations. The over-arching mandate of its Charter and its status as the most representative of international institutions render the United Nations ideally suited to promoting agreement among Member States.

In conclusion, I wish to contend that a new global human order is not a stand-alone process with respect to development, but instead, an all-embracing solution to the challenges of development. Our approach is to create a framework to allow various initiatives to contribute to the larger goal and to identify additional measures necessary to fill the gaps and overcome the structural impediments to reversing the growing disparities between rich and poor countries, with a focus on human development

In this spirit, my delegation will work with Member States in presenting a draft resolution to address the next steps in the consideration of this proposal.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I wish to join in thanking the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Marjatta Rasi, for her introduction of the Report of the Council and to congratulate her on her able and efficient leadership of the Council during 2004. The Council made good progress in the discharge of its mandate and in reaching decisions on most of the issues before it, although a few issues remain unresolved.

The annual high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) once again provided a welcome opportunity for dialogue and the exchange of views on the implementation of commitments and on the management of the global economy. What is of particular importance for us is that this process should be strengthened to maximize the potential for such a forum to influence decision-making on macroeconomic policies and development cooperation.

Jamaica continues to believe that more efforts should be made to ensure that the outcome of the high-level meeting is taken beyond mere presidential summaries. We should seek to produce a more practical and action-oriented document, committing each institution to concrete steps to develop coherence and consistency in policies and operational activities.

We should also continue to improve the preparatory process to ensure that the discussions are more narrowly defined to accommodate a sharper focus on critical issues. One day alone does not allow enough time for handling an agenda so broad.

The Economic and Social Council should also endeavour to foster ongoing contact with those agencies beyond the one-day meeting for regular exchange of information and to promote continued coordination on international economic policies.

With respect to participation, we wish to emphasise the importance of the involvement of UNCTAD on an equal basis with all other participants, and we insist that this be acknowledged explicitly in the description of the meeting and in its documentation. We attach great value to UNCTAD's role in providing analytical perspectives and in its recommendations on policy matters, which must find an important place in the discussions.

The report shows that the work of the Economic and Social Council in the various segments was carefully planned and managed so as to ensure the orderly completion of its business within the time constraints.

All of this work needs to be well publicized, as many important issues received attention. The high-level segment examined the mobilization of resources for poverty eradication, especially in the least developed countries, and many new initiatives were proposed to stimulate implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

In the coordination segment, we were pleased by the decision to focus on gender mainstreaming and on rural development, which should be pursued in order to ensure that they are both given greater emphasis in implementation programmes, particularly for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The provision of relief in humanitarian emergencies, highlighted in one segment, is one of the most visible aspects of the work of the United Nations. In the context of continued problems of underfunding, therefore, we wish to once again urge increased contributions to the humanitarian activities, as they remain one of the most effective examples of activities that give a positive image to the United Nations.

In the operational activities segment, valuable contributions were made for the triennial comprehensive policy review, which will be debated during this session of the General Assembly. The critical issues revolve around increasing the core funding to operational activities, the simplification and harmonization of procedures, the strengthening of the resident coordination system and the emphasis on the delivery and effectiveness of technical assistance so as to maximize the potential of the United Nations system to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

With regard to the general segment, we continue to believe that the pressures of time and the scope of work require better arrangements for managing the issues before it. Of particular importance is the need for more time to be devoted to analysing the work being done by the subsidiary bodies and to giving direction on current programmes and future activities.

Some elements of the work of this segment are still outstanding. We make particular mention of the issue of international cooperation on tax matters, which we consider to be an important area for making progress towards better global governance. We are disappointed at the resistance that has so far prevented full agreement on this issue. The advantages of reform are clear, and the benefits will accrue to all. There is no hidden agenda. The objective is cooperation through the establishment of an intergovernmental structure that is inclusive and broadly representative. It is our

hope that the issue will be completed during the resumed session next week.

During the course of the year, the issue of reform and revitalization of the Council was addressed in a panel discussion. Those discussions were useful, but it is time for the process to be moved from the discussion level to the consideration and adoption of concrete proposals for reform. We feel it is important that the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened in its coordination role and that its influence and effectiveness should be increased. Current trends in globalization and interdependence have increased the need at the global level for greater coordination, monitoring and management of international economic relations.

Institutional reform is needed at three levels. The first level involves increasing the role of the Council in overall management by bringing under its auspices coordination of the various agencies dealing with trade, finance and technology. Some proposals have been made to create a new entity. While this is also possible, there is no reason why the Economic and Social Council could not be transformed to become the vehicle for an increased role for the United Nations in the management of the global economy.

Secondly, there is also need for a review of the logistical arrangements for the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, especially with reference to the duration and scheduling of sessions, as well as the question of venue. In our view, greater efficiency would result from having two annual sessions and concentrating the Council's work in New York. We are in general support of the reform measures proposed by Ambassador Rosenthal at the conclusion of his presidency in 2003. We would also add that there is need to make improvements in the system of panel presentations so that they can become a better source of information, new ideas and new initiatives on the various items.

Thirdly, the Economic and Social Council should expand its collaboration with the other organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, in order to ensure its participation in the consideration of the economic and social dimensions of conflict situations. We are aware of the important role played by the ad hoc advisory groups in Africa, and we welcome the formation of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which should play a role in mobilizing assistance for development in Haiti and in helping to direct the building of its economic underpinnings for stability and economic improvement.

In general, we believe that the Economic and Social Council should be assertive in this role, in accordance with its responsibility under the Charter for the management of economic cooperation. To that end, we think it is desirable that the Council should meet on an ad hoc basis throughout the year, as the need arises, to respond to situations of economic crisis and to make recommendations on measures to be taken.

Turning now to agenda item 41, the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order — which is being considered jointly in this debate — the Permanent Representative of Barbados spoke on behalf of the Caribbean Community. For now, we will make only a few general remarks.

Jamaica believes that it is important for the United Nations to be a force in formulating core principles, norms and policies that advance the common interests of humanity. A world order which is founded on equitable principles provides a framework for action to promote global welfare. That is of value to all of us. It is that aspiration to ideals that underpins the onward march in human progress and the fulfilment of the destiny of humankind. Our higher instincts and spiritual values lead us towards seeking the achievement of the common good. This is not just a philosophical idea or a moral issue. It is the basis for human security and, ultimately, human survival. The interests of peace and social justice and economic welfare are closely linked, and it is through a process of increased cooperation anchored in core values and objectives that we will be able to surmount the great challenges of our time and to apply remedies to problems that afflict a large percentage of humanity, particularly in the developing countries.

We therefore give our full support to the development of a strong political consensus on principles and values in order to forge a global partnership to benefit all peoples. We believe that the proposals made by the representative of Guyana on the elements of a framework of a new global human order provide constructive guidelines for the policies of the United Nations and Member States. We support the creation of a process through the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly to develop those

proposals further for the adoption of a declaration by the General Assembly.

Mr. Krasnov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus believes that this year represents an important stage on the way towards restoring the former role and influence of the Economic and Social Council on the organization of the activities of United Nations bodies in the economic, social, ecological and humanitarian spheres. We are generally satisfied with the results of the council's session. The Council made a significant contribution to the triennial policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system and to strengthening coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance.

Belarus highly commends the work of the Council's Bureau in seeking and using effective new mechanisms to improve the working methods of the Council, which is an important coordinating body of the United Nations system.

On a positive note, we would cite the new practice of joint meetings of the various segments of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on related issues and the informal dialogue organized by the Bureau in May on the issue of the Council's reform. Significant work was done by the Bureau to carefully prepare the significant events of the Council and to increase the number of participants at April's special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council, on financing for development, with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

However, we regret that the Council has not been able to fully meet its responsibility under the United Nations Charter of effectively monitoring and organizing the work of its functional commissions. It is important to move from a routine, automatic approval of the commissions' reports and decisions to a comprehensive and critical analysis and, if necessary, the correction of those decisions.

We believe that the Economic and Social Council should further strengthen its role in coordinating and strategically guiding the operational activities of the United Nations system. We are ready to support proposals for the Council's reform that provide for annual consideration by the Council of implementation of the General Assembly resolution on the triennial policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system.

The Economic and Social Council should further strengthen its interaction with the Security Council in order to pool efforts to create conditions favourable for reconstruction and development of States that have suffered armed conflicts.

Belarus supports the Council's decision to focus, at the high-level segment and the coordination segment of the Council's 2005 substantive session, on issues related to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration. That substantive session should serve as an important stage for review of implementation of the decisions adopted at the Millennium Summit and other recent major international forums held in recent years in the economic, social and related fields under the auspices of the United Nations. If successful, the session of the Economic and Social Council will provide the necessary prerequisites for the success of the United Nations major high-level event next year.

Like the United Nations as a whole, the Economic and Social Council is currently at a difficult stage in the reform and the revitalization of its activities. Given our experience and knowledge, the Republic of Belarus is ready and able to make a constructive contribution to that process for the benefit of all Member States of the Organization. That aspiration is the basis of our decision to submit our candidature for election to the Economic and Social Council for the 2007-2009 term. Traditionally, Belarus devotes special attention to the Council, as it is the most important coordinating body responsible for priority areas of the Organization's activity.

In that regard, we look at the Council's work in the context of its responsibility for developing a constructive dialogue with partners in order to seek and adopt the optimal decisions for the improved functioning of the United Nations.

Mr. Saleem Saifullah Khan (Pakistan): It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome the report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2004 on behalf of the Pakistan delegation. The members of the Bureau, under the able stewardship of the President of the Council, Ms. Marjatta Rasi, have done a commendable job in bringing out this comprehensive report. We compliment them all for a job well done.

Six decades ago, under the United Nations Charter, we committed ourselves to achieve international cooperation for resolving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems. We also pledged to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and the conditions for economic and social progress and development. The Economic and Social Council, as one of the major organs of the United Nations system, has a central role to play towards the realization of those objectives and commitments.

The most important role for the Council is to create the conditions that would lead to a genuine global partnership for economic growth and sustainable development — a role that the Council seeks to perform through system-wide coordination of United Nations activities in the economic and social spheres.

The report under consideration today thus presents a good opportunity to review the activities undertaken by the Council to achieve those objectives. This year the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization took place on 26 April. The special meeting has become a major platform for substantive deliberations on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. We feel that this process needs to be strengthened further to make the existing cooperation between the United Nations and other international economic organizations effective and meaningful.

The other important element of the Council's activities is the high-level segment that focuses on a specific theme each year. This year's theme addressed resource mobilization for the least developed countries (LDCs) in the context of the Programme of Action for the LDCs. The draft ministerial declaration adopted by the Council on that theme recognized the weak implementation of the LDC Programme of Action. The declaration expressed the concern that this trend would lead to a failure to reach the targets set by the Programme of Action and underscored the need to redouble global efforts to create an enabling environment at all levels in order to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development of the LDCs.

It is regrettable that, despite intensive consultations during the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council this year, member States were unable to reach an agreement on the theme for the multi-year work programme, with the exception of the theme for 2005. That theme, which will focus on a review of the progress made in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), will afford the Economic and Social Council an important opportunity to provide input for the 2005 high-level event.

We are quite encouraged to see the Council assume an active role in a number of key areas through its spearheading of a number of important initiatives in the past several years. The Council's manifesto on poverty eradication, drawn up in 1999 during the high-level segment, provided the critical conceptual basis for the MDGs. Similarly, the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, the international endorsement of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the holding of the International Conference on Financing for Development would not have been possible without the critical and substantive input of the Economic and Social Council. The Council has also been entrusted with the task of conducting an integrated and coordinated follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. This is in addition to its responsibility to monitor and assess the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development.

In order to enable the Economic and Social Council to perform these important tasks, we will have to bolster its strengths and eliminate its shortcomings. The ambit of the Council's activities is undergoing a positive expansion, which indeed is a very welcome development. We strongly believe that the Economic and Social Council can and must act as the central platform for global dialogue to promote coherence, consistency and coordination of trade, development and financial policies.

The inequities and exclusive nature of the process of globalization only makes such an integrated approach an urgent contemporary imperative. The position of the Economic and Social Council in the international organizational architecture eminently qualifies it to perform this unique role of overseeing and coordinating economic and social decisions at the national, regional and international levels.

Development issues have economic and social dimensions, and those two dimensions are becoming

increasingly intertwined. An integrated approach to the economic and social aspects of development would help avoid duplication and overlap, besides ensuring strengthened coordination and optimal utilization of resources at all levels. The principal objective should be to promote growth, equity, coherence and humanism in national and international policies.

A major shortcoming commonly attributed to the Economic and Social Council is its inability to enforce its decisions and its relative powerlessness in comparison to the international financial, trade and economic institutions. Pakistan believes that the Economic and Social Council should optimize its resources and opportunities — including through improving its programme of work — and serve as an instrument to strengthen multilateralism. It should provide a quality platform for high-level engagement by member States, international institutions, civil society and the private sector for discussions on emerging global trends, harmonize global policies and identify common but differentiated responsibilities for global action.

The Economic and Social Council should play a role in managing globalization and promoting equitable socio-economic development. The goals set out in the Millennium Declaration must continue to guide efforts in that direction. Security in its most comprehensive sense can be assured only when there is simultaneous progress in addressing security threats as well as social and economic challenges. To this end, the Council should also play a key role in the preparations for the 2005 major event, which will focus on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit and the integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences. The high-level and coordination segments of the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council should develop concrete recommendations on the basis of a review of the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, in particular the MDGs, MDG-based reports prepared by a large number of countries, reports of regional commissions and the work of the functional commissions to achieve the MDGs.

We clearly see the close and interdependent nature of peace and development and fully realize that one is unsustainable without the other. We therefore believe that the process of United Nations reform would not be complete without according equal emphasis to enhancing the role of the United Nations in promoting the global development agenda and without empowering its various organs, including the Economic and Social Council. This should be in addition to restoring the primacy of the General Assembly as the supreme organ of the United Nations.

Finally, there is a growing recognition that the principal organs of the United Nations need to closely cooperate and coordinate their work in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to effectively address the multidimensional crises facing the world today. In that regard, the proposal for establishing ad hoc composite committees with representation from the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and other stakeholders needs to be seriously considered.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): I would like to begin by thanking the Ambassador Marjatta Rasi, the President of the Economic and Social Council, for introducing the 2004 report of the Council (A/59/3 and Add.1), which provides a good overview of its work. As Iceland is hoping to be elected to the Council next week, my delegation would like to address a few issues which it finds of particular interest.

The international community has committed itself to addressing the problems and challenges facing the poorest countries in the world. As we all know, the progress has been mixed, and while a number of countries have progressed at an unparalleled rate, others have lost headway and need urgent attention. That is particularly true for sub-Saharan Africa.

Accelerated progress towards meeting internationally agreed goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), requires the concerted efforts of developing and developed countries alike. Iceland intends to contribute its share to achieving the MDGs, and it is anticipated that by 2009 Iceland's official development assistance will be more than double its current level.

Next year will be particularly important in our global fight against poverty. The major event that will take place here in New York will be a vital opportunity for assessing where we stand in relation to the MDGs. In light of that, the themes of the 2005 Economic and Social Council high-level and coordination segments are particularly relevant, and we appreciate that they will have a major input into the 2005 high-level review of the General Assembly.

Next year we will also have a very important event in the field of women's issues and promotion of

gender equality, as the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will be dedicated to the review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. We have done an excellent job at the United Nations in formulating agreements on women's rights, but we urgently need to live up to those agreements.

Gender mainstreaming is one way of improving gender equality, and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) was a step forward in that direction. However, it is also important that we strengthen our efforts to secure its full implementation, especially regarding women's participation in decision-making. It is also vital that the policy of gender mainstreaming be implemented, monitored and evaluated on all levels in other areas, such as development.

Finally, I would like to mention human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action declare all human rights to be universal and inalienable. Protection and promotion of human rights is a primary responsibility of Governments.

In relation to human rights, Iceland would like to express its deep concern that the Economic and Social Council failed to approve a resolution last summer to reverse the Commission on Human Rights decision 2004/117 on human rights and human responsibilities. That decision, together with the pre-draft declaration on human rights and human responsibilities, constitutes a direct assault on the foundations of human rights and international human rights law by claiming that such rights are conditional. It is our duty to protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of our varying political, economic and cultural systems.

Mr. Azor (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): The report of the Secretary-General before us is of considerable importance in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The same is true of the item entitled "The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order".

My delegation welcomes with great satisfaction the proposals concerning the commemoration in 2006 of the tenth anniversary of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development, contained in the report in document A/59/346.

The weakness of State institutions in developing countries is without any doubt a serious obstacle to their socio-economic development and harms their chances for achieving sustainable development. It necessarily leads to poor management of available resources and favours corruption. Therefore, it is indisputable that an efficient public administration can play a vital role in the process of social organization and the creation of wealth — to which we all aspire.

Since the 1970s, many countries have applied methods of private sector management to public enterprises. Applying the laws of the market to the public sector, however, has not necessarily improved the performance of the administration. It should be noted that the notion of governance emerged in order to correct the malfunctions in administration by stressing certain values such as equity, transparency and accountability in government affairs.

We concur with many other countries that we must strike a balance between reform of administration and reform of governance. In other words, we must succeed in establishing an administration based on the rule of law and a shared governance, with social and cultural aspects as a common denominator, if we really wish to build up a genuine leadership class capable of guiding the new changes that the State is undergoing.

That endeavour must stress the need to establish and comply with adequate legislation to strengthen State institutions. Proper training and rational handling of public sector human resources, encouraging and stimulating expertise and innovation, and using information technologies can all strengthen public administration.

In the legislation of States, careers and advancement in public administration are generally guaranteed; that is often what motivates officials. The failure to respect that requirement is harmful to the proper functioning of public administration and intensifies the frustration and lack of interest felt by staff, often leading to acts of irresponsibility and corruption. It is likewise important that the qualifications of public officials be consonant with their duties.

Today my country is irrevocably committed to a path of transition that aims to be both viable and irreversible. We need to emphasize the re-establishment and normal functioning of our national institutions, which have been weakened or that simply

do not exist as a result of the various socio-political crises that the country has undergone. In that regard, the provisional Government intends to reform the Haitian public administration — without resorting to witch hunts — so as to enable it to play its proper role in the development process.

My delegation welcomes the resolve expressed by the international community to help restore and strengthen Haitian national institutions in full respect for the rule of law. We encourage a long-term assistance strategy based on specific measures to provide lasting remedies for the shortcomings of our institutions. If we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals, we must address significant structural challenges in view of the situation of socio-economic decay and poor institutional functioning in our developing countries.

I turn now to the extremely important question of the role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order. Creating a new global human order was once the great concern of philosophers and statesmen. Even in medieval times, there were those who wrestled with metaphysics in order to give humankind its proper place in the universe.

In 1945, almost 60 years ago, the founders of this Organization eloquently reformulated that humanistic theory in their own fashion by articulating, in the United Nations Charter, the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of socio-economic development among the main purposes and principles of the world Organization. Later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined the sacred nature of respect for the physical integrity of human individuals and their social and economic rights, which are the foremost among rights. Thus, we must restore humankind to its true place. The 2000 Millennium Declaration is a genuine model for human rehabilitation.

Unfortunately, the course of history, with its procession of wars, atrocities, slavery and the slave trade, racial discrimination and xenophobia, amounts to a series of systematic violations of human rights. Terrorism, organized transnational crime, the illicit drug trade and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are all grave threats to the survival of humankind.

Nowadays, hunger and poverty threaten the survival of humankind on our planet. It is dismaying and painful to note that most of our brothers huddle in filth and seek shelter in shantytowns. The correlation between migration and poverty is growing ever more direct and challenges our leaders to the highest degree. Hundreds of millions of human beings live in subhuman physical conditions, with the sole prospect of poverty and a marginal existence before them. They do not even have access to drinking water. More than 1.2 billion people in the developing world survive on less than $1 a day, while 800 million suffer from malnutrition and 153 million children under the age of five are dangerously underweight.

Moreover, education is denied to a multitude of children who never manage to finish their primary studies. Epidemics are killing our peoples. The process of environmental degradation is accelerating, with often disastrous consequences. My country recently paid the price of that with the passage of tropical storm Jeanne. The rights of our peoples are constantly being trampled underfoot.

Furthermore, the requirements of economic globalization — which are often ill-suited to the socio-economic realities of our States, prioritizing the laws of the market to the detriment of human beings — do not offer our peoples opportunities but impoverish them and may well give rise to social disruption and situations of grave political instability, thus delaying the process of development.

Development, through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, means breaking down the barriers of ignorance and poverty and elevating human beings to their full dignity. That will require the genuine commitment of the leaders of developing countries, resolved to adopting a policy of reform and to strengthening governance to the benefit of their populations. If we are to achieve those objectives, it is also essential that we aim at a global partnership in which the rich countries reaffirm their commitment to providing genuine assistance.

It is true that States must be determined to undertake the genuine democratization of societies and the effective rebuilding of institutions. However, the support of the United Nations is highly necessary in assisting Governments to formulate efficient policies to address the challenges and to grasp the opportunities of an urbanizing world.

In that regard, my delegation echoes the appeal made by the Secretary-General in 2003 in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, in

which he wrote that access to the markets of the developed countries, increased official development assistance and debt relief would give the developing countries a fair chance of reducing the extreme poverty that prevails within their borders.

Ms. Iamsudha (Thailand): This statement is being delivered on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations.

Thailand firmly believes that the realization of a people-centred approach to development and the empowerment of individuals, particularly through the goals of poverty eradication, achieving full employment and enhancing social integration, is inextricably linked to international peace and security. In that conviction, Thailand attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council, which is the principal policy body of the United Nations, after the General Assembly, entrusted with the formal authority for coordinating activities related to international economic and social development.

My delegation has carefully studied the report submitted by the Economic and Social Council and wishes to share some views to contribute to the strengthening of the Council's work, as follows.

Thailand believes that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) could serve as a basis for defining a more action-oriented Economic and Social Council and for providing more focus to the Council's work and agenda. However, the Council should be given an increased and clearly defined role as a forum for reviewing and evaluating the United Nations system-wide efforts to achieve the MDGs.

In this globalized and fast-moving world, the Economic and Social Council's credibility very much depends on its ability to respond in a more timely and flexible manner to current crises or opportunities. As a result, it may be imperative for the Council to enjoy the flexibility of holding, on an as-needed basis, more ad hoc focus meetings on critical and urgent issues.

In order to increase its visibility and political profile, the Economic and Social Council would need, as a priority, to increase its expertise and specialization in economic and social issues. The Council may also benefit from the convening of increased high-level policy debates on cross-sectoral economic and social development issues, involving a cross-section of governmental representatives, as well as those from the international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector. Consideration of such interrelated issues as global macro-economic strategy and management, the adequacy of funds for financing development, and the implementation of the MDGs should be encouraged, as they could greatly assist the Economic and Social Council in the conduct of its work.

To streamline and enhance the efficiency of its work, the Economic and Social Council needs to focus its activities on its primary raison d'être, which is serving as an overarching policy body for the numerous programmes and commissions it oversees.

With regard to its relationship with other bodies, institutions and civil society, the Economic and Social Council should continue to develop public-private partnerships, and promote public awareness of development issues. As one of civil society's main formal links with the United Nations, the Council should continue to identify ways that would enable civil society to more efficiently and substantively contribute to its work. There should be greater emphasis on the involvement of the private sector in the United Nations global development agenda.

The Economic and Social Council should also develop more established coordination with international financial organizations and regional economic groupings — for example the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the Group of Eight and the Group of Twenty — by encouraging them to present their annual reports for comment and evaluation by the Council. Such an approach is not intended to be intrusive, but to ensure overall coherence, to strengthen each organization's political accountability and to foster genuine partnerships with the Economic and Social Council.

In addition to forging closer partnerships with other related organizations, the Economic and Social Council also needs to expand its coordination with the Security Council on specific economic security situations, as well as enhance coordination with the General Assembly to strengthen complementarity and, at the same time, avoid unnecessary duplication of work.

In Thailand's view, the concept of creating a framework for the promotion of a new global human order emphasizes the strengthening of multilateral development cooperation and the adoption of a holistic

approach to socio-economic development. Given the universal nature and recognition of the mandates of the United Nations, this global body should undeniably have the principal role in promoting a new global human order. Hence, the role and capacity of the Economic and Social Council as the principal coordinating organ of the United Nations for economic and social development must also be strengthened to effectively contribute to the promotion of a global human order.

Thailand supports all initiatives and efforts to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council. The presentation of its candidature for election to the Council this year very much reflects how determined Thailand is to actively contribute to and strengthen the work of the Council, as well as to help bridge the gaps and forge partnerships among developed, developing and least developed countries for the full and effective realization of internationally agreed development goals.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): My delegation is pleased to participate in the General Assembly deliberations on the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/59/3 and Add.1). I would like to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Marjatta Rasi of Finland, the President of the Council, for her able stewardship and valuable contribution to the successful work of the Economic and Social Council during 2004.

We are pleased to note the Council's increasing engagement in promoting economic and social development through its policy guidance and recommendations. We recognize the important role of the Council in ensuring coordinated follow-up to and implementation of all major United Nations conferences and summits, which focused on the need for action in line with agreed commitments. In our view, as its tasks are pursued, the contribution of the Council and the entire United Nations to economic and social development will be widely recognized. The elaboration of a multi-year working programme based on a cross-sectoral approach is an important added value that further strengthens the Council's role in the review and follow-up process, and we look forward to that programme's early adoption.

My delegation emphasizes the importance of increased interaction by the Council with international financial and trade institutions. We consider the spring meetings of the Council, in the broader context of financing for development, to constitute an important dialogue for promoting coherence, maintaining a collaborative approach and evaluating the efficiency of the follow-up mechanism to Monterrey.

In the implementation process, the support of the functional commissions is crucial, and in this regard we value their efforts to consolidate their work. We look forward to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and believe that a policy session should produce action-oriented policy options based on the outcome of the review session and the details of each thematic review. Policy coherence is essential, and the session should identify possible actions in which cross-cutting issues are identified in the means of implementation.

Azerbaijan supports the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Furthermore, we believe that the UNHCR request that a mechanism be established to address the complex problem of internal displacement will be positively considered. In the meantime, we welcome the Council's recommendation to increase the membership of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme.

We value the efforts to streamline the working methods of the Council, including through improving dialogue with the Bureaux of the functional commissions. That would allow the Council to focus its attention on the specific issues requiring the mobilization of a system-wide response from the United Nations. In this connection, we consider General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B to constitute a basic framework for continuing those efforts.

In conclusion, let me stress the importance of the contribution of the Economic and Social Council to the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of 2005, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/291.

Mr. Suazo (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My statement will relate to item 12 of the agenda: the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/59/3 and Add.1). Allow me first to express my thanks to Ambassador Marjatta Rasi of Finland for her introduction of the report and for the excellent job that she has been doing at the head of the Council during the past year.

My delegation would like to make some purely procedural comments in this regard. The report of the Economic and Social Council is of particular importance to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, countries falling under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative and small island States that are highly vulnerable environmenta'ly. Honduras falls into those categories in more than one respect, and that is why we have particular interest in this report. It basically gives an overview of activities relating to the coordination of international cooperation and the related political decision-making process. At the same time, it presents the General Assembly with recommendations concerning the policies to be pursued.

Since this is the first time that the report is being considered and presented directly to the Assembly for approval, this new procedure deserves special attention and consideration. As everyone knows, in the past the various topics and sections of the report were considered in the Second Committee of the General Assembly. That enabled delegations to hear and exchange opinions with the officials responsible for the various divisions of the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs in order to discuss economic and social policies.

This interaction made it possible to raise questions, deal with complaints, propose solutions and clarify concepts concerning the contents of the report on areas of the Council's work. It also eased the legislative process of the Committee before draft resolutions passed on to the Assembly.

The reform approved at the last session has now left us without this essential step of consultation and dialogue, as the report has now come directly to the plenary. This is a matter of concern, and we believe that a mechanism needs to be found to rectify this lack of communication, coordination and information between delegations and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.

Delegations, particularly those to which I referred earlier — small island States, the least developed countries and the HIPC countries — cannot be deprived of up-to-date information on issues that are sosensitive for their development. At the same time, we need to consider the possibility of facilitating the activities of delegations, as they work in the General Assembly. Generally speaking, delegates to the Economic and Social Council are, by the nature of the subject matter, representatives in the Second Committee. Missions now have to redouble their efforts during consideration of the Council's report in plenary.

Lastly, my delegation wishes to point out the need for greater and better coordination between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Steps taken thus far are positive, but much remains to be done. The constant reform and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council is a joint undertaking.

In the course of this debate, my delegation will be proposing, together with some other friendly countries, a draft resolution on public administration and development, which we hope will receive the support of this Assembly. The draft resolution is designed to follow up on programmes to combat corruption and promc.. good practices in the management of public services, information technology at the service of the civilian population and e-government. Its main purpose is to provide follow-up to the legislative process in this regard, which previously took place in the Second Committee on a consensus basis.

In a constructive spirit, we shali be looking at the possibility of recommending the inclusion of specific economic and social items on the agenda of the Second Committee.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these two agenda items. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 12 and 41.

Agenda items 35 and 47

Culture of peace

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/59/201 and A/59/223)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.15)

Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education

Report of the Secretary-General (A/59/268)

Draft resolution (A/59/L.9)

The Acting President: I invite the representative of Tunisia to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.9.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of Tunisia, I would like to read to the General Assembly the following statement:

As we are celebrating the fifty-ninth anniversary of the International Day of the United Nations, we affirm our respect for the noble purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, for which it was created. These objectives include working for peace, security and development and the means to achieve these ends. At a time when the international community is preparing to celebrate the year 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, in accordance with resolution 58/5, adopted unanimously on 3 November 2003, Tunisia would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its thanks to States, regional and international organizations and the United Nations specialized agencies, all of which supported the adoption of that resolution.

We hope that draft resolution A/59/L.9, which is aimed at implementing the desired objectives in the fields of education, health and society and at consolidating peace and development throughout the world, will receive support and consideration by all parties.

Tunisia is convinced of the importance of sport and physical education, which are vital factors for mental and physical health and serve to promote social cohesion. My country reaffirms that the cultural and development dimensions of this draft resolution are consonant with international goals, in particular the Millennium Declaration, which called for greater cooperation, coordination, tolerance, solidarity, consultation and dialogue.

In our view, it is up to the international community to establish sound foundations for physical and sport-related activities within the framework of the necessary material and social conditions, so as to counter anything that could impede sports activities and development. These include items that would endanger mental and physical health, in particular, steroid use — doping — or using sportsmen for commercial purposes. This means that we must adopt some mechanisms that would enable us to protect athletes under the principles articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also requires that we confront any person or situation that might try to flout the rules of sports conduct or act in contravention of the rules of fair play.

Once again, we would like to say that health, development, peace and education are the four dimensions that this draft resolution wishes to strengthen. Those objectives can be implemented only through close cooperation among all of the sport and international agencies, so that we can adopt effective and innovative measures that will make a contribution to implementing the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in developing countries, and to helping them to build their capacities and adopt practical measures in sport-related activities and physical education.

Tunisia hopes that the efforts of the international community and all concerned parties will be coordinated so that we can hold programmes and purposeful events on all levels during the International Year for Sport and Physical Education that will enable us to attain the draft resolution's objectives by promoting activities to strengthen the principle of sport without violence or steroid use. We hope that in 2005 the international sporting community will be able to adopt an international convention to fight the use of steroids, as well as a sports "code of good practice".

I now have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.9, entitled "Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace". Since the publication of that document, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, the Sudan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Yemen.

The draft resolution before us — which is based on General Assembly 58/5 — has garnered broad support and is the result of collective effort; we engaged in thorough consultations before submitting it to the Assembly along with the above-mentioned

countries. I should like to take this opportunity to express sincere appreciation and thanks to all the delegations and United Nations organs that took an interest in the draft resolution for their contributions and for helping us to achieve the desired objectives of the International Year for Sport and Physical Education. In particular, I wish to thank Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, and Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee, for their constant efforts in that regard.

Like resolution 58/5, this draft resolution addresses the objectives of sport and physical education in today's world. It calls upon Governments and governmental agencies, as well as other sport-related bodies, to organize international sporting events commemorating the International Year for Sport and Physical Education and thus to express their commitment to implementing one of its objectives: strengthening the role of sport and physical education in development programmes and policies in order to spread a culture of peace and the values of dialogue and understanding among peoples. The draft resolution also seeks to encourage Governments and international sporting bodies to undertake development projects and partnerships that will assist in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and will help developing countries to build their sport and physical education capacities. Moreover, the draft resolution proposes a range of measures aimed at helping us to make sport and physical education a way to make the world safer. It stresses that international conventions must be implemented to prevent the use of steroids in all sports.

We have learned that, in the light of the various commitments that have been undertaken, Secretary-General Kofi Annan will launch the International Year for Sport and Physical Education on 5 November 2004 rather than on 27 October. Accordingly, operative paragraph 2 should read:

> "*Decides* to launch, on 5 November 2004, the International Year for Sport and Physical Education, as a means to promote education, health, development and peace".

In conclusion, the Tunisian delegation, together with the other sponsoring delegations, would like to express the hope that the General Assembly will adopt this draft resolution and launch the International Year for Sport and Physical Education — a year that will help to ensure peace, security and development throughout the world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution A/59/L.15.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): I have the honour to introduce the Philippine draft resolution entitled "Promotion of cooperation among religions" (A/59/L.15), under agenda item 35, "Culture of peace".

The brevity of our draft resolution is in conformity with the Assembly's decision to streamline all draft resolutions. Although the draft is self-explanatory, we will soon hold informal consultations on it, in keeping with customary practice.

The Philippines introduced a draft resolution last year on the same subject. We let the concept germinate in the minds of delegation members and in their capitals for a year. Recent positive developments have reinforced our belief that it is now opportune to introduce a revised version during the current session. I should just like to highlight three of those encouraging developments.

First, the Panel of Eminent Persons created by the Secretary-General last year to review the relationship between civil society and the United Nations stated in paragraph 156 of the results of its work — also known as the Cardoso report (A/58/817) — that some civil society constituencies, including religious and spiritual groups, "deserve greater attention by the United Nations because of their explicit representational roles or wide memberships". I should like to cite five important functions of religious and spiritual groups mentioned in the same paragraph. They provide powerful community leadership, shape public opinion, provide advice on ethical matters, facilitate reconciliation between conflicting communities and identify the needs of vulnerable groups. Nations are aware of those important functions. Their reiteration by the Panel of Eminent Persons reminds us of the universal understanding on the need for the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance.

Secondly, UNESCO made significant conclusions in its report entitled "Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation" (*see A/59/201*), transmitted in accordance with resolution

58/128. I would like to refer to a number of UNESCO's conclusions.

First, the report states, in paragraph 33:

> "A particularly important dimension of the dialogue among civilizations is interreligious dialogue, which implies dialogue both among religions and within a single religion. Indeed, the key issue raised by the dialogue among civilizations is the place of ethics in the relationship between societies, peoples and individuals."

Secondly, paragraph 35 states:

> "In this context, world religions and beliefs could contribute tremendously to the promotion of a culture of peace if they resolve to, on the one hand, collectively face the problems confronting the world today, such as terrorism and sectarian violence, while, on the other hand, practice tolerance within their respective religious communities and in their inter-faith relations."

Thirdly, the heads of State or Government of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) decided at their summit, which took place earlier this month in Hanoi and was co-chaired by Viet Nam and the Netherlands, to launch an initiative entitled "Interfaith Dialogue". ASEM is an interregional grouping of States members of the European Union and of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The theme of this landmark ASEM initiative, sponsored by Indonesia and the United Kingdom, is "Building interfaith harmony within the international community". Its objectives are, first, to foster mutual respect among all faiths and religions in Asia and Europe, secondly, to propose recommendations to actualize interfaith harmony within the international community and, thirdly, to enhance the role of religious civil society in the conduct of second-track diplomacy.

During the most recent ASEM summit, the Philippine President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, strongly supported the Indonesian and British proposal for an interfaith dialogue to help prevent terrorism and to promote religious understanding as a component of the dialogue among civilizations and cultures. In that regard, the President also called for the activation of the ASEM caucus in the United Nations to give impetus to the idea.

All those developments validate the vision of the Speaker of the Philippine Congress, Mr. José de Venecia, who proposed the topic to the leaders of the United States, the European Union and Asia as early as two years ago as a subject whose time for serious consideration and action has come. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines highlighted this theme in his address to the General Assembly last month.

Those three developments underpin the importance of the draft resolution that my delegation is introducing today. The Philippines has publicly recognized the important functions of religious and spiritual groups as outlined by the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. In fact, the Philippines translated this recognition into concrete action when it utilized the services of an interfaith group in helping to solve our problem in the southern Philippines.

The Philippines, based on its own experience, strongly endorses the UNESCO conclusions on the vital role that religions play in the dialogue among civilizations and in the promotion of the culture of peace.

Other developments stress the urgent need for cooperation among religions. Senegal is reported to be organizing, in the near future, an international conference of all religions to seek their views on how they can contribute to alleviating pressing international concerns. The religious leaders of Eritrea and Ethiopia reportedly met to help carve out a lasting peace between their two countries. During the general debate last month, the President of the Government of Spain proposed the creation of an alliance of civilizations between the Western and the Arab and Muslim worlds, and he intends to submit a proposal to the Secretary-General for the establishment of a high-level group to consider the matter.

In our host country, the United States, there are interreligious fellowships that are successfully cooperating to help themselves and the homeless and to address other social problems. Other countries have their own interfaith mechanisms, supported by their Governments or by non-governmental organizations.

All these positive national experiences have to be made known and to be shared. This is the reason why the Philippines is proposing, in its draft resolution, that the Secretary-General seek the views of Governments

and other bodies on how cooperation among religions can be promoted and further enhanced.

In conclusion, I should like once again to invite the attention of this body to the Declaration issued by the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in Kazakhstan. They expressed their common desire for peace, aversion to violence, support for development, promotion of harmony and mutual understanding and cooperation for the avoidance of conflict and the fostering of goodwill — the raison d'être of A/59/L.15.

Mr. Hackett (Barbados): I have the honour to speak, on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), on agenda item 47, entitled "Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education".

I would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/59/268, which describes activities undertaken and planned in support of the International Year.

CARICOM countries endorse the objectives of the United Nations system for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, as summarized in the Secretary-General's report, and we are committed to undertaking activities in support of the Year.

We agree that sport can be used as a powerful promoter of development and peace. Furthermore, we believe that this can begin with children, since sport is a participatory way for children and young people to learn values and lessons that can be long lasting. That is why CARICOM countries appreciate the efforts of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace in raising awareness with regard to strengthening physical education and sport in education systems. We also applaud UNICEF for placing greater emphasis on this issue in its work programmes.

Sport also promotes the spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play and teaches teamwork, discipline, leadership, trust, respect for others and even coping skills. Sporting activities can provide a supportive and self-sustaining environment that can help to prepare young people to meet the difficult challenges that they are almost certain to experience in their lives.

CARICOM countries have a long history of using sport in schools for such child-development purposes. Changing societal values are, however, creating new challenges for successfully incorporating sports in this way, and we look forward to working with UNICEF and UNESCO in incorporating sports and physical education into some of their country and regional Caribbean programmes.

As cricket-playing countries, we also encourage UNICEF to include the global and regional governing bodies of cricket-playing countries in their partnerships with the sports world. The CARICOM region will host the Cricket World Cup Championship in 2007, and we believe that the period between now and the start of the championship would be an opportune time for the launch of such a partnership.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Sport serves as a bridge linking different nations, different civilizations and different beliefs. The contemporary Olympic Games have reinforced the human pursuit of the spirit of peace, development and self-improvement. The Olympic concept of "higher, faster and stronger" is already deeply rooted in the hearts of the peoples of the world, including its youth. This was clearly shown by the success of the XXVIIIth Olympic Games and the 12th Paralympic Games in Athens this year. Here we would like to thank the Government and the people of Greece for their contribution to that effort.

The United Nations, in the context of promoting world peace and development, has done a great deal of work to publicize the Olympic spirit. The General Assembly adopted a resolution last year proclaiming 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. We hope that the international community will take advantage of this opportunity to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, promote peace and development through sport, advocate dialogue and exchange among different civilizations, and strive to build a world of peace and prosperity.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the development of sport. Our fundamental goal is to achieve better health for the people and improve the national physique. Since 1995, when the Chinese Government promulgated the "Programme to Build National Health", China has witnessed a series of marked achievements in its undertakings in the area of sport. Public awareness of health and how to improve it has been heightened,

mass sports activities are multiplying, and physical education is a major course requirement at the primary, secondary and tertiary educational levels.

At this year's Olympic Games in Athens, the Chinese team won 32 gold medals — a historical record. At the 12th Paralympics which followed, the Chinese team ranked first in terms of gold medals and total number of medals. Chinese athletes have added a remarkable chapter to the annals of the Games in their birthplace, sharing Olympic glory and the Olympic dream with lovers of the Olympics the world over.

In 2008, China will host the XXIXth Olympic Games and the 13th Paralympic Games in Beijing. The Chinese Government and people are working wholeheartedly and making every effort to prepare for those events. The construction of stadiums and facilities and the development of the necessary bio-environmental, social and urban infrastructure are all under way in an orderly manner. We will continue to work with the International Olympic Committee and other Governments further to display the Olympic spirit and try our utmost to make the Beijing Olympic Games a wonderful occasion to maintain peace, promote development, enhance exchanges among different civilizations, and strengthen friendship among the peoples of all countries.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I will be speaking on agenda item 47 today.

My delegation took note with great interest of the report by the Secretary-General on sport in the service of peace and development and the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. We are also pleased that this report is being discussed at the same time as the draft resolution on sport as a means of promoting education, health, development and peace.

Both texts underline once again the fact that sport can make a remarkable contribution to the promotion of peace and to the pursuit of several development goals — be they individual, social, cultural or economic. Sport encompasses fundamental human values that correspond to those of the Charter of the United Nations — for example, respect for opponents, acceptance of rules, fair play and team spirit.

Switzerland has for a long time now been taking a variety of measures to promote the effective use of sport for peace and development.

At the initiative of Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and former President of the Swiss Confederation, Switzerland held the International Conference on Sport and Development at Macolin in February 2003. That event brought together 380 representatives of 55 countries, from all segments of society, to exchange information and to compare their experiences. The Macolin Declaration and the recommendations that were adopted on that occasion are a source of inspiration and guidelines throughout the world for activities in the field of sport and development.

In its development cooperation and humanitarian aid activities, Switzerland supports numerous projects and programmes in which sport is considered a means of achieving human, social and economic goals.

The International Year of Sport and Physical Education is an excellent opportunity to raise the awareness of various levels of society as to the tremendous potential of sport in the promotion of peace, development and health. This Year of Sport 2005 will also encourage cooperation between different actors and will enable them to form lasting partnerships. Switzerland will contribute to the realization of those goals at the international and national levels.

At the international level, my country intends to continue to support Mr. Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, and to provide financing and logistical support to the United Nations Office in Geneva for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. We will be convening the second International Conference on Sport and Development in Macolin from 4 to 6 December 2005. This Conference will be the highlight, and will also mark the end, of the International Year of Sport 2005. Switzerland will also publish a brochure on "Sport for Development and Peace" in which authors from different countries will present a synthesis of current experiences and conclusions and will identify development opportunities that can still be exploited.

We will continue systematically to integrate sport in Switzerland's development cooperation and humanitarian aid and to strengthen its role by regularly exchanging information with bilateral and multilateral development organizations.

At the national level, Switzerland has established a national committee for the International Year of Sport consisting of Government bodies, sport associations, non-governmental organizations, and representatives in the fields of business and science. The committee's mandate is to coordinate activities with schools, sport associations, non-governmental organizations and the business and science spheres. It is expected that several thousand events will be organized in Switzerland to mark the International Year of Sport.

At the national level, the events planned include "Schools on the Move", where, in more than 1,000 classes, children will play sports every day during the school term; "Switzerland on the Move", which will feature a sporting event in which the entire population can take part, to be held in the majority of Switzerland's 2,900 communes; and, finally, an educational campaign on sport and development in Swiss schools.

The draft resolution to be discussed today fully reflects this spirit. It invites all actors to strengthen their commitment and their cooperation in the field of sport for development and peace, with the aim of achieving not only a healthier but also a more just and peaceful world. As the host nation of the International Olympic Committee and of numerous other private sport associations, Switzerland fully supports this draft resolution.

Ms. Moore (United States of America): The United States delegation welcomes today's consideration of the Assembly's agenda item "Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education".

The United States has a long history of supporting international athletic events for professionals and amateurs, including hosting eight modern Olympic games. One of America's proudest inventions, baseball, has proven to be one of America's proudest exports. Little league baseball and softball leagues have been formed in over 75 countries, with 180,000 teams serving nearly 2.7 million boys and girls.

The United States Government supports international athletic competitions because they promote understanding and respect for cultural diversity, foster international partnerships and increase greater awareness of global social issues, such as human rights, the role of women in society, and drug prevention. Moreover, they generate a deep sense of national pride.

As President Bush recognized just last week in hosting the United States Olympic team at the White House, international sport allows a country to show its values and character. He praised the virtues that sport can reflect: being humble in victory, gracious in defeat, expressing compassion for competitors and demonstrating great tolerance and diversity within a country.

Today, the Assembly can support the United Nations ideal of teaching the world's youth not merely about sport, but how to use sport to promote friendship, mutual understanding and well-being. Our delegation joins the consensus on today's draft resolution in support of that ideal.

We thank the Secretariat for its report, entitled "Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education", contained in document A/59/268 of 16 August 2004. The United States will continue to refer to it as we plan activities for the International Year and to that end we invite input from civil society organizations with a sport focus. We look forward to reviewing initiatives to use sport as a means of promoting intercultural, post-conflict and peace-building dialogues, as the report suggests.

The report correctly states that sport brings individuals and communities together and that it can be a powerful vehicle through which the United Nations can work towards achieving its goals. In that vein, concerning the draft resolution, the United States would like to note that world leaders at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development and at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed to support the internationally-agreed goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We would have preferred to see the reference in the draft resolution changed to that effect.

Also, we note the report's review of anti-doping efforts. The United States supports the process under way at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with respect to the negotiation of an international convention against doping in sport. The United States recognizes that the code of good practice contemplated in the draft resolution would extend beyond the issue of anti-doping; however, it

would be appropriate for States drafting such a code to take into account the World Anti-Doping Code of March 2003, which has the support of more than 150 countries. In particular, it would be helpful to avoid a duplication of effort or the possibility of a conflict between those two instruments.

The United Nations increasingly attests to the unifying power of sport and in turn we find the United Nations flag flying over more and more sporting venues. Every year, the United Nations hosts more than 12,000 athletes right outside this Hall for a friendship run to warm-up for the New York City Marathon, the world's largest spectator sporting event. The next friendship run is soon: Saturday, 6 November, at 8 a.m.

The United States hopes that the International Year will further dialogue around the world, as we strongly believe that sport can be a useful tool of diplomacy. Among our sport diplomacy programmes are those to help educators teach children the importance of diversity and cultural understanding, done in connection with the National Football League and foreign citizens studying in the United States as Fulbright scholars. Also, for the first time, the United States hosted last summer the International Children's Games and Cultural Festival for 2,200 foreign youth. Our diplomacy initiatives offer training programmes for participation by the disabled and other programmes send American basketball players abroad to conduct coaching clinics and youth tournaments.

During the International Year in 2005, the United States will host major athletic events. Those include, for example, the World Spring Speed Skating Championships, the Federation Internationale de Natation Swimming World Cup, the Luge World Championships, the Cycling Elite Track Championships, the Show Jumping and Dressage World Cup, and the Union Cycliste Internationale Track Cycling World Championships. These types of exchanges forge constructive partnerships within the international community not only between athletes, but also between organizers, hosts and spectators.

Turning to physical education, for many years the United States President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has served well as an advisory committee of volunteer citizens. Through various creative initiatives, the Council promotes health, physical activity, fitness and enjoyment for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities through participation in physical activity and sport. To promote those activities, President Bush designated May 2004 as our National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

Sport exercises a deep hold on the human imagination which is virtually universal and which does not seem to vary from society to society at that level of emotion. Sport transcends all perceived barriers across ethnicities, ages, genders, religions and abilities. It reminds us of our common humanity.

Mr. Al-Zaabi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to start my statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his report and for the valuable information contained therein, which we expect to enrich our deliberations on this item.

Ten years ago, the General Assembly started observing the Olympic Truce, a 1,200-year-old sacred Greek tradition, to prove once again that humanity has a propensity for peace and dialogue, and not for fighting and wars. The Truce requires the cessation of all acts of hostility to allow spectators to come and watch the competitions and to return to their homes safely.

Though the achievement of peace and stability requires compliance with the principals of the Charter and the provisions of relevant international laws and conventions, the process of promoting and consolidating peace should be implemented through mechanisms of mutual understanding and based on respect for and partnership among various cultures, religions and civilizations. Those principles were reflected in the idea of the Olympic Truce, which calls for equality and fair competition, regardless of ethnic background, religion, race or nationality of the athletes. It is an exemplary tool for instilling those great values and disseminating a culture of peace, tolerance, conciliation and harmony among countries and peoples.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation and partnership between the United Nations system and the International Olympic Committee, which has already led to joint activities to advance development, mobilize humanitarian assistance, protect the environment and improve health and education services. In that context, we stress the need to exert special efforts to assist developing countries, especially the smallest and

poorest among them, to rebuild the infrastructure of their sports institutions and meet training requirements so that they can actively participate in the Olympic Games. We also affirm the importance of reaching an international consensus on a code of good practice for sport and for introducing strategic partnership programmes for all stakeholders and sports-related organizations, including sports associations and the private sector, in order to disseminate a culture of peace and to realize sustainable human development. Furthermore, partnership programmes will also help in combating violence, terrorism, crime, illicit trade in drugs and many other vices that beset our societies.

In accordance with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, and the instructions of his brothers, the members of the Federal Supreme Council, the rulers of the emirates, great attention has been devoted to promoting sport in the youth sector, in particular in traditional sport and leisure activities. Efforts made in that direction have resulted in the establishment of the Zayed Sport City in 1979, as a cultural monument in the region, the Supreme Council of Youth and Sports and the National Olympic Committee, which develops strategies to promote and sponsor sport activities in the United Arab Emirates, including training, refereeing and fair competition. Additional substantial budgetary resources were allocated to promote the establishment of new and modern sports clubs, associations and specialized teams and modern stadiums across the country. As a result, the number of sports clubs in the United Arab Emirates has increased from 8 in 1970 to 31 clubs today. The number of sports associations and unions has also increased — from 3 in 1973 to 23 today — and that is in addition to 8 girls' clubs and 25 specialized sports clubs, including, among others, a marine club, a disabled persons' club, an equestrian club, a camel-racing club, a chess club and a wrestling club. Those clubs allow the youth of the United Arab Emirates to develop their skills and to participate effectively in many regional and international tournaments and competitions, including the Olympic Games, where they have won several medals — the most recent case being Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammad al-Hasher al-Maktoum, who won the first gold medal for the United Arab Emirates in the men's double trap-shooting competition at the most recent Olympic Games in Athens in 2004.

The United Arab Emirates believes that sport and physical education should hold a fundamental place in the educational system and development, since those disciplines contribute to the physical, psychological, educational and social balance of children and youth. Firmly convinced of that approach, the United Arab Emirates has incorporated physical education in its educational system, including at the primary and university levels, in order to develop the mental, moral, physical and social skills of students.

Many other leisure activities are vigorously pursued in the United Arab Emirates, including those organized through the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts clubs, which are now among the most active movements in Asia, particularly in the field of improving the environment and implementing national programmes to promote public awareness of humanitarian, social, health and development activities.

In conclusion, we hope that the United Nations observance of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 will promote the concept of sports for all. We also call for advancing and intensifying international efforts to promote and implement initiatives for the advancement of human development and to integrate sports activities and their noble values in the educational and development strategies and programmes of countries to further interaction and communication among different cultures and civilizations and to build peace. We also look forward to reaching international consensus in order to elaborate an anti-doping convention to prevent the abuse of drugs in all sports activities and to develop sports for youth in a healthy and sound environment that promotes discipline, leadership, self-confidence and interactions among societies.

Mr. Mongkolnavin (Thailand): My delegation has the pleasure of addressing this Assembly on agenda item 35, "Culture of peace" and agenda item 47, "Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education".

On agenda item 35, my delegation attaches paramount importance to the culture of peace. The Thai Foreign Minister stressed in his statement, delivered during the general debate, that cultivation of a culture of peace is necessary for today's world. We need to create peace through our diversity and, indeed, through a holistic approach.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), entitled "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)" (A/59/223), which provides a comprehensive review of the work carried out by various international organizations and recommendations with regard to the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace that will help us realize a culture of peace in eight areas, namely: education; sustainable economic development and social development; respect for all human rights; equality between women and men; democratic participation; understanding, tolerance and solidarity; participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge; and international peace and security.

My delegation shares the viewpoint expressed in paragraph 102 of the report that "it is of paramount importance that Member States develop and sustain action-oriented strategies and activities in support of culture of peace and non-violence", especially for women and children, society's most vulnerable members.

Turning to agenda item 47, my delegation strongly supports the use of sport as a means to cultivate peace, foster understanding and promote development. The current Government views the promotion of sports and health care — as well as using sport as a means to promote child development and to fight against drug addiction — as national policies. Therefore, my delegation supports the proclamation of 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, which advocates for the concept of "sport for all", the integration of physical education into the educational curriculum and encourages the use of sport as a platform for intercultural, post-conflict, peace-building dialogue and the dissemination of information about the value of sport and physical education for development and peace. In that connection, my delegation also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the topic, contained in document A/59/268.

Indeed, not only is sport important to us because it helps us to live a healthier lifestyle, it also promotes social interaction, relationships and business partnerships and cultivates a culture of peace. In that regard, my delegation wishes to congratulate Greece for the successful organization of the Olympic Games in Athens.

For our part, my delegation was proud to see Thai athletes participate in the fullest spirit of sportsmanship and with determined dedication in the Olympic Games in Athens. We are also proud of the achievements of our athletes, medal winners or otherwise. Those athletes have indeed succeeded in generating greater awareness of the importance of the true value of sport among the Thai public, as well as acting as an impetus for the Government to reinforce its strategy to raise the standard of sport and promote development of athletic talent in Thailand.

My delegation is of the view that every person, whether young or old, can benefit from sport. Children, in particular, can benefit tremendously from sport, as it helps them in their overall developmental process, promotes their self-expression and helps them to build social connections, as well as keeping them away from illegal activities, such as drugs and crime. This philosophy is in line with the Thai saying that sport is a magic medicine or, in a Western understanding, sport is a panacea.

From the social perspective, my delegation is pleased to see the growing number of women and disabled persons involved in sport. Some of them have become Olympic gold medallists. Sport can also help people living with HIV/AIDS to overcome stigma and discrimination. Through participation in sport, these people can embark on the path of regaining their self-confidence and reintegrating once again into society.

Domestically, the Thai Government fully appreciates the value of sport. This year, many initiatives were introduced in order to promote awareness and better understanding of the value of sport. For example, the Thai Government organized a countrywide outdoor aerobics event, with the Prime Minister playing an instrumental role. This reflects the importance that the Thai people give to sport and the benefits it brings. It is also a manifestation of solidarity and harmony that has brought Thai people from different ages, backgrounds and religions together in a peaceful manner. Last month, a workshop chaired by the Prime Minister was organized in order to discuss the "roadmap for sport" for Thailand, an initiative that is believed to enhance the value of sport and raise the standard of athletic skills and sportsmanship of Thai people, especially children.

In this time of increasing conflicts, sport can be instrumental in developing a platform for intercultural,

post-conflict and peace-building dialogue. In addition, sport can play a crucial role in bringing people together after conflict has ended, promoting trust and friendship and helping in the reconstruction process of a community. The United Nations has an important role to play in promoting sport in this regard. To this end, my delegation supports the creation of a code of good practice to enhance the cooperation between Member States and international sports bodies, especially the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which deserves particular commendation for its continued effort in promoting sport as a tool for development and peace. My delegation looks forward to the fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport, to be organized by UNESCO in December this year, to discuss the development-related themes of sport pertaining to the International Year for Sport and Physical Education in 2005.

To conclude, my delegation wishes to pledge our continued support to promoting sport for all and also wishes to urge the United Nations system and its partners to further their efforts in promoting sport for education, health, development and peace through participation through all sectors of the society.

Ms. Tariq Aziz (Pakistan): A profound transformation is under way in international relations. The dangerous balances of the cold war have been replaced by the complex and equally dangerous realities of our world today. It is a world marked by intensifying globalization — of economics, production, trade and information, on one side, and terrorist violence, poverty and disease, on the other. The growing asymmetries in power among States, discrimination in the dispensation of international justice, repression of people's legitimate aspirations and growing socio-economic disparities have precipitated new threats to international peace and security. Acknowledging that wars begin in the minds of people and that it is in the minds of people that the defence of peace must be constructed, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace on 13 September 1999.

The Declaration defines this culture of peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours based on the following: respect for life; ending violence and promoting the idea and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law; full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts; and respect for and promotion of the rights of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information.

Article 3 of the Declaration proclaims that the fuller development of a culture of peace is integrally linked to the right of all people to self-determination. All people, including those living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, are entitled to exercise their inherent right to self-determination. The Declaration further calls for elimination of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance among all civilizations, peoples and cultures, including towards ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. Thus, nations and peoples have separate political existences, but, as the General Assembly has recognized, understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all civilizations, peoples and cultures are essential to promoting a culture of peace. That is the paradigm that must be constructed for the twenty-first century.

In the post-11 September scenario, misunderstandings and suspicions between different faiths and cultures have been accentuated. Some quarters have utilized this to advance their self-serving thesis of an inevitable clash of civilizations. Some States that are occupying and oppressing other people have exploited it to justify the repression of people of other faiths and cultures. Extremists commonly vilify other religions and cultures, spreading prejudice and hate. Our own religion, Islam, has been so vilified and defamed. Such dangerous trends are deliberately fuelled by those who believe they will gain from a clash of religions and cultures. These trends of hate and intolerance need to be firmly addressed and effectively reversed by the international community.

Cooperation — and not the clash of civilizations — must be the paradigm for our collective endeavours. Promotion of understanding, harmony and cooperation among religions and cultures is the indispensable avenue through which we can lift the veil of ignorance, misconception and prejudice that have become so

tragically pervasive in recent times. We agree with the recommendations of the report transmitted by the Secretary-General on a culture of peace that a particularly important dimension of the dialogue among civilizations is inter-religious dialogue, which implies dialogue both among religions and within a single religion. Indeed, the key issue raised by the dialogue among civilizations is the place of ethics in the relationship between societies, peoples and individuals. Inter-religious dialogue could be an important factor in highlighting the dynamic interplay between spiritual traditions and their specific cultures by focusing on their mutual contributions and exchanges.

It is therefore of vital importance that the international community encourage inter-religious organizations and movements working for peace to engage in a more effective and active dialogue and cooperation with a view to promoting harmony and coexistence. Ethnicity, religion, culture, language or race must not be allowed to become a source of divisiveness.

We must be the catalysts of change and not the prophets of doom. We must affirm the indivisibility of the human race. We must reassert our common humanity and common universal values.

The President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, has outlined a concrete strategy of enlightened moderation which seeks to promote socio-economic emancipation, human resource development, and the just and peaceful resolution of disputes, with a view to advancing cooperation and preventing confrontation between cultures and civilizations — especially between Islam and the West.

Enlightened moderation is a vital strategic option to prevent the current international system from dissolving into interminable conflict and strife. Promoting the concept of enlightened moderation would be a fitting response to the enormous global challenges which the world confronts today.

The Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace encourages Member States to take action for the promotion of a culture of peace at the national and international levels. Accordingly, under this item, during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly Pakistan initiated a draft resolution for the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, which was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly in February 2004. This year, too, we have submitted a draft resolution under this agenda item highlighting the same principles to enhance human well-being, freedom and progress everywhere by uniting efforts to secure universal peace. It is our hope that the General Assembly will again adopt by consensus Pakistan's draft resolution on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation. That would be a categorical, authoritative and global rejection of the messages of intolerance, hate and discrimination emanating from hate-mongers.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): By proclaiming the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, the United Nations has recognized the diverse civilizational achievements of humankind, crystallizing cultural pluralism and creative human diversity.

The report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on agenda item 35 provides an overall strategy on the part of the international community regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. It also reflects the broad range of activities carried out by the United Nations system, international institutions and civil society, which together have made an important contribution to the objectives of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

We consider it important for UNESCO, as the lead United Nations agency for the Decade, to achieve an effective coordination of the efforts of all the key actors and stakeholders to ensure the consistent implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action.

Another UNESCO report on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation underscores the fact that a particularly important dimension of the dialogue among civilizations is inter-religious dialogue, which is a key factor in highlighting the dynamic interplay between spiritual traditions and their specific cultures.

Resolution 58/128 underlines the importance of promoting understanding and tolerance among peoples in all their diversity in the areas of religion, belief, culture and language. We share the view that, under current conditions, it is of fundamental importance to renew our common commitment to a true culture of

peace by strengthening our efforts to develop dialogue and mutual understanding.

Kazakhstan is a peace-loving and tolerant country. Our experience has effectively demonstrated that different ethnic groups, religions and confessions can coexist and flourish in favourable conditions of peace and internal stability. We believe that world religions and confessions could contribute tremendously to the promotion of a culture of peace.

It is precisely for that reason that, at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions was convened in our country in September 2003 which enjoyed wide support on the part of the international community. The forum was attended by hierarchs of the main world religions and confessions, who gathered together in Kazakhstan to discuss the most important issues of concern to humankind. The meeting made a valuable contribution to the promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

The leaders and representatives of world religions, who participated actively in the work of the forum, stated loud and clear that every nation and every religion chooses its own road to the Creator and that they all were against terrorism, fanaticism and religious intolerance. They agreed that it was time to address pressing political and spiritual problems through a constructive inter-religious dialogue and decided to convene such congresses regularly.

Kazakhstan had the privilege of chairing the forum and of leading the process of its institutionalization. In that regard, a secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions was established in Kazakhstan. Currently, the secretariat is actively working out a charter of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which is to be submitted for discussion at the next meeting of the secretariat of the Congress in May 2005.

The secretariat has endorsed in principle the concept of the second Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which is tentatively scheduled to be held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, from 12 to 14 September 2006.

We believe that this initiative should be fully supported by the United Nations and promoted by its Member States and by regional and non-governmental organizations. Kazakhstan is open to cooperation with all interested parties in the follow-up of the outcomes of the first Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Resolution 58/5 recognizes the important role of sport in the implementation of internationally agreed development goals. The report entitled "Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education" confirms that sport offers a natural partnership for the United Nations and is a powerful instrument through which the Organization can work towards achieving its important goals.

We believe that the proclamation of the year 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education will broaden the general perception of sport and encourage the further development of intercultural, post-conflict, peace-building dialogue. We believe also that the International Year of Sport and Physical Education provides an opportunity to promote the value of sport, and it is imperative that initiatives within the framework of the International Year have long-term effects.

We reaffirm that sport and physical education play an important role in the promotion of peace and development and friendly relations among nations. They represent effective measures to combat crime as well as drug and tobacco addiction. We also concur with the view that the practice of sport is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical and emotional health.

The development of sport is a priority area of the national policy of Kazakhstan. The country fully supports the ideals of humanism and friendship between nations. The Republic has set up a paralympic committee and established various sports federations and is strengthening its international ties in the area of sport.

In conclusion, I wish to join other speakers in stressing that today, more than ever, we need to promote the value of peace. Kazakhstan is looking forward to extending continued support for the coordinated efforts to promote sustainable peace and security in the world.

Ms. Gallardo (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to speak on agenda item 35, "Culture of peace".

The Government of El Salvador has attached particular importance to this item since we signed the 1992 Peace Accords at Chapultepec, Mexico. Salvadorans have embarked on a process of learning how to translate those agreements into true peace. This internal process has paved the way for us to strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights. We have learned that peace-building, as one of the essential elements of the culture of peace, is possible only if there is resolve on the part of those who have laid down their weapons to enter into a debate and to exchange ideas with regard to the differences that are inherent in every society.

El Salvador would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to working together with the United Nations family to explore, to innovate and to implement initiatives and strategies aimed at fostering the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Unfortunately, the current state of affairs shows that new threats to peace and collective security have arisen that transcend borders. The Government's efforts, at both the national and international levels, are directed towards creating mechanisms to alleviate the worsening social, economic and environmental conditions.

We are fully convinced that preventing frustration, intolerance and violence is at the heart of the very notion of a culture of peace. The manifestations of international terrorism, which are attempting to destabilize the effectiveness of the multilateral system and imperil the maintenance of international peace and security, compel us to redouble our efforts to engage in a dialogue among cultures and religions.

The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace provides a comprehensive frame of reference within which Governments, international organizations and civil society can direct their activities towards specific actions aimed at the establishment of a culture of peace in the new millennium. In this regard, we endorse sports as a tool that facilitates peaceful coexistence. In that context, El Salvador has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution introduced by Tunisia.

As has been acknowledged on many occasions, peace is not merely the absence of conflict. It is an evolving, participatory and dynamic process within society that requires us to be creative, to learn to be tolerant and to engage in dialogue. International cooperation thus provides a mechanism for rapprochement and respect among human beings in the search for solutions to conflicts. But that also involves a degree of responsibility among various cultures and levels of development.

Salvadorans bear faithful testimony to the fact that peace is possible only when the path of national reconciliation is chosen, making room for dialogue to resolve internal disputes, with political will leading to the creation of joint democratic institutional mechanisms, and respect for authority and the rule of law providing for a new form of coexistence. We know that there can be no peace without development. Thus the Government of El Salvador is sparing no effort to achieve a secure peace in which security and development become a way of life for the majority of the people.

In his report contained in document A/59/223, the Secretary-General sets out a number of important elements for our consideration that we must keep in mind as we embark on the task of evaluating progress made in the implementation of the commitments undertaken in the context of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

Member States now have an opportunity to share useful experiences in terms of the implementation of these commitments at the national level. The dissemination of values that foster tolerance, peace and learning, through formal and informal education, and of new attitudes and behaviours that instil a culture of peace should be carried out by means of innovative, cross-cutting programmes in public policy — otherwise, the peace to which we are committed will not be sustained.

The Government of El Salvador agrees with all those who have recognized that the right to peace is a fundamental human right. It is a third-generation right that the General Assembly recognized in resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984 and that the members of the Organization of American States reaffirmed in the Caracas Declaration, adopted on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of its charter.

We reaffirm our commitment to the education for peace programme, an initiative launched by UNESCO. We are convinced that the teaching of values, behaviours and attitudes necessarily requires a constant

learning process in children and adults. Respect for human rights must be learned and transmitted if we are to build a culture of peace. In El Salvador in recent years we have strengthened our approach through innovative programmes to teach the idea of peace at all levels, including through education for boys and girls from a very early age.

As the constitution of UNESCO states, since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. Salvadorans have learned that peace means finding a way of living together with others in friendship, turning to reason and not to violence when our differences set us apart.

In conclusion, we would like the issue of the culture of peace to be included in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals; we should all work together to achieve our common objectives.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.